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PUBLIC OPINION IN CANADA ON CERTAIN
ASPECTS OF THE ABORTION LAW:

THE SITUATION IN LATE 1974 WITH A
LOOK BACK TO 1970



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INTRODUCTION

This is a report on a sample survey of public opinion in Canada on certain aspects of the law relating to abortion. Conducted in late 1974, the survey replicates a CBC survey carried out almost four years previously.¹ The purpose of this earlier study was to provide factual information for use in the production of a CBC network television program dealing with the abortion laws.² This was a time when the subject of abortion had just begun to regain prominence in Canada as a major social issue and when there was much speculation but little reliable information on what the public felt - or indeed knew - about its legal aspects.

Since then the abortion issue has been much in the news and the laws relating thereto, which have remained unchanged, have become increasingly a subject of public discussion and controversy. Accordingly, this latest survey was designed to update the available information - to October 1974 - and to underline any major changes in public opinion that seemed to have taken place in the four intervening years.

¹Public Opinion in Canada on Certain Aspects of the Law Relating to Abortion: A Fact-finding Survey in December 1970. CBC Research.

²The program, in the CBC-TV weekly public affairs series, 'Weekend', was broadcast on Sunday January 10, 1971. It included a report and comment on the survey results.



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HOW THE INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED

The scope and design of the 1970 and 1974 surveys were identical. In each case the focus of the inquiry was on the extent to which, given a knowledge of the present law relating to abortion, people accepted it or felt that it should be changed.

Testing undertaken prior to the 1970 study had indicated that the subject of abortion was not one in which straight question-answer procedures, orally administered, could reasonably be expected to produce valid results. On so sensitive a topic some people were unlikely to answer truthfully in a personal-interview situation. Also, in this inquiry what we wanted were not snap judgments but rather the considered opinions of people who had had the chance to think through the questions asked. In these circumstances the decision was taken in 1970 (and again in 1974) to use a mail questionnaire.

Respondents in this latest survey, as in 1970, were drawn from a series of population samples originally selected for use by the Corporation for various research purposes. First stage sampling was by area proportionate to population, then on a probability basis by household and thence to the random selection of an individual within each selected household. Separate samples were drawn for those persons whose main language of communication was English and for those whose main language was French. Together, appropriately weighted to take account of English-French population distribution, the total sample base was broadly representative of all persons in Canada aged 12 and over.

Having regard to the nature of this survey, persons under the age of 18 were eliminated from the samples and, from the remaining adults, 5182 persons were randomly selected - English and French separately. Each was sent the questionnaire attached as Appendix B. While all persons thus selected had been respondents in a previous CBC Research project, the purpose of this prior contact was totally unrelated to the subject of the present inquiry. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that this in itself should have affected the reliability of the sample for the present purpose.

Questionnaires were completed and returned during the last three weeks of October 1974. Following standard CBC Research practice designed to obviate any bias that might arise if respondents are aware of CBC involvement, the questionnaires were mailed from, and returned to an independent postal address. The overall response rate on this occasion was just slightly below that obtained in the 1970 survey - 69 per cent as against 73 per cent - providing a total usable sample of 3561 respondents.

What follows in the body of the report is a discussion of the main findings. Appendix A provides detailed tabulations of the responses to each of the questions asked, by language group, age, and sex, appropriately weighted. As shown, the sample bases on which the percentage distributions of response are calculated for the various demographic sub-groups are all adequately large. Throughout the text, the terms 'English-speaking', 'English' and 'anglophone', and the terms 'French-speaking', 'French' and 'francophone' are used interchangeably to distinguish the two language groups defined above.

FINDINGS

The report that follows deals in sequence with each of the various issues touched on in the questionnaire, then reviews the findings as a whole.

Initial Reaction To The Law

The first question asked respondents to consider the present law on abortion and to indicate the extent to which they felt this law was adequate. It was phrased as follows:

"Under the present law in Canada, an abortion is legal only in cases where a Hospital Committee decides that the continuation of the pregnancy is likely to endanger the woman's health. Which one of the following statements do you most agree with?

- (a) This law is too permissive: it makes it too easy for a woman to obtain a legal abortion.
- (b) This law is too strict: it makes it too difficult for a woman to obtain a legal abortion.
- (c) This law is just about right: it should remain unchanged."

Response to this question - among the French and English groups and for the two combined - is shown in the following table. (Here, as in sub-

sequent tables, comparable responses in the 1970 survey are shown in parentheses):

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Present law is:						
Too permissive, makes it too easy.....	11	(5)	18	(19)	13	(9)
Too strict, makes it too difficult.....	48	(63)	34	(32)	44	(55)
Just about right, should remain unchanged	39	(31)	44	(44)	40	(34)
No answer	2	(1)	4	(5)	3	(2)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

The distribution of francophone opinion very closely parallels the distribution in 1970. Thus, in October '74, as in December '70, about one-third of French Canadian adults feel that the abortion law is too strict, just less than one-fifth hold the opposite view that the law is too lax, and some 44 per cent feel that the law as it stands is just about right. Differences of this order, from 1970 to 1974, are statistically insignificant.

Among English-speaking Canadians, however, there has been some re-distribution of opinion in the intervening four years. In 1970 a fairly substantial majority (63 per cent) felt that the law was too strict,

only a small 5 per cent taking the 'hard' line that the law was too permissive. Four years later, the single most widely-held opinion in English Canada is still that the law is too strict, but this is now the opinion of just slightly less than half the total adult population.

It would seem clear, then, that such a shift as there has been, since 1970, in Canadian opinion as to the general fairness of the abortion law is a shift in opinion that is entirely confined to English Canada. Lacking any direct evidence, one can only speculate as to how much of this 'hardening' of opinion is traceable to the very considerable publicity that has been given over the past year or so, in the English-language press, to Justice Minister Lang's criticisms that many hospitals are interpreting the abortion law too loosely.

What of sex differences? In 1970, men were somewhat more inclined than women to feel that the abortion law was too strict. This was found to be true of both the English and French groups. The latest inquiry indicates no change in this general trend with male respondents again more likely than women to regard the present law as overly strict:

Response	English		French		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)
Present law is:	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too permissive, makes it too easy.....	12 (5)	9 (4)	19 (22)	17 (16)	14 (10)	11 (7)
Too strict, makes it too difficult....	43 (58)	54 (68)	31 (28)	38 (36)	40 (50)	50 (60)
Just about right, should remain unchanged	43 (36)	36 (27)	45 (44)	42 (44)	43 (38)	38 (31)
No answer	2 (1)	1 (1)	5 (6)	3 (4)	3 (2)	1 (2)
Total	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)

Thus, the view that the present law is too strict and that legal abortions should be easier to obtain is most widespread among the male English group, not so widespread among the female English, less widespread still among the male French, and least widespread of all among the female French. This was the same pattern that emerged in 1970. As already noted, however, the feeling among the English group that the law is too strict is now less widespread than in 1970; this holds true for both men and women.

As to age differences, the 1970 survey had revealed, almost predictably, that older people tend to be more inclined than younger people to feel that the abortion law is already too permissive, younger people more inclined than their elders to feel that greater permissiveness is required. As the following table shows, this tendency persists in 1974 - among both English and French Canadians. In the latter group, the virtual

Response	English		French		Total	
	18-49	50+	18-49	50+	18-49	50+
	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)	'74 ('70)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The present law is:						
Too permissive, makes it too easy.....	9 (3)	15 (8)	12 (14)	31 (30)	10 (6)	19 (14)
Too strict, makes it too difficult.....	53 (67)	37 (55)	41 (38)	19 (18)	50 (60)	33 (45)
Just about right, should remain unchanged	37 (29)	45 (36)	45 (46)	41 (42)	39 (33)	44 (38)
No answer	1 (1)	3 (1)	2 (2)	9 (10)	1 (1)	4 (3)
Total	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)

'no change' in opinion, already reported, between 1970 and 1974, applies both to those over and those under 50 years of age. And, among English Canadians, the general hardening of opinion already reported for the group as a whole, is reflected in the current viewpoint of both younger and older people. Thus, in English Canada, both those over 50 years and those under 50 were less likely at the end of 1974 than four years earlier, to pronounce the abortion law as too strict. However, it remains a fact that, even among English Canadians over 50, those who feel the law is too strict (37 per cent) greatly outnumber those who feel it isn't strict enough (15 per cent). This gap is even wider among younger English Canadians under 50 and younger French Canadians under 50: indeed it is

only among older French Canadians, aged 50-plus, that this trend is reversed and those who feel the abortion law is too permissive outnumber those who feel it is too strict.

Abortion On Demand?

So far then, what we have found is that a substantial minority of Canadian adults (40 per cent) feel that the current law relating to abortion is adequate and requires no change - but that another, slightly larger group (44 per cent) feel that the law is not sufficiently liberal. This leads one to ask what specific changes these people would like to see; would they for instance endorse abortion on demand?

Question 2E was designed to probe this point. It asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed that:

"An abortion should be permitted under the law to any woman who requests it, whatever the circumstances?"

The distributions of response to this question, in 1974 and in 1970, are shown below:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Agree	27	(29)	19	(17)	25	(26)
Disagree	71	(68)	78	(81)	73	(71)
No answer	2	(3)	3	(2)	2	(3)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

What this reveals is a very considerable stability of opinion over time, among French-speaking and English-speaking persons. Both in 1970 and currently, only about a quarter of the total adult population endorse the idea of legal abortions being granted on request while a much larger majority of about 70 per cent reject the idea. And, in line with the response to the opening question of the survey (discussed above), relatively more English-speaking Canadians are for 'abortion on demand', relatively more French-speaking Canadians against it.

All Abortions Treated As Illegal?

At the opposite extreme is the question: what proportion of the total adult population of the country feels that the law should treat all abortions as illegal. Question 2A examined this by asking respondents to agree or disagree with the proposition that:

"An abortion should not be permitted under the law in any circumstances."

The distribution of responses in 1970 and 1974:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Agree	7	(5)	17	(17)	10	(8)
Disagree	88	(88)	77	(79)	85	(86)
No answer	5	(7)	6	(4)	5	(6)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

Perhaps not surprisingly, a notable stability of opinion again emerges over the years. In both English and French Canada, an overwhelming (85 per cent) majority of people continue to reject the idea that all abortions should be ruled illegal.

The Need For The Hospital Committee?

A further question (2C) dealt with the mechanics of the present law. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statement:

"In those cases where the law permits an abortion because the woman's health is in danger, this should not require the opinion of a Hospital Committee - the opinion of a qualified physician is all that the law should require."

Opinion on this issue in 1974 and in 1970 divided as follows:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Agree	71	(79)	71	(72)	71	(78)
Disagree	27	(18)	26	(27)	27	(20)
No answer	2	(3)	3	(1)	2	(2)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

Again we see that francophone opinion is virtually unchanged since 1970. Among anglophones, however, there has been a change; significantly more people now than in 1970 feel that the law should require more than

the opinion of one physician. Here again one can only speculate on the extent to which this shift in opinion may be attributable to the recent English press coverage of the Justice Minister's view that many hospitals are excessively lax in their adherence to the abortion law. In any event, the great majority of people - both in English and in French Canada - quite clearly continue to feel that the current requirement for a Hospital Committee should be dropped in favour of requiring only the opinion of a qualified physician.

It will be noted that many more people feel that only the opinion of a physician should be required (71 per cent) than had previously indicated, in response to Question 1, that they feel the present law is too strict (44 per cent). Since this substitution of a qualified physician for the Hospital Committee would in fact require a relaxation of the present law, there would seem to be some anomaly here in the responses to these two questions - as there was in the 1970 survey.

The explanation is clearly related to the fact that, while Question 1 involved a general statement of the law that included a reference to the Hospital Committee, Question 2C was deliberately much more specific in its reference to the role of the Committee vis-a-vis the opinion of a physician. In effect, this second question allowed people who had previously expressed satisfaction with the general thrust of the present law to consider this particular legal requirement. Hence, what we have is an indication that substantially more people feel the need for some change in the abortion legislation than was suggested by the answers given to the opening question on the general fairness of the present law.

In The Case Of Rape?

Respondents were asked their opinion on two other specific issues. First (Question 2B), did they agree or disagree with the statement that:

"An abortion should be permitted under the law in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape."

1974 and 1970 opinion on this issue was as follows:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Agree	84	(85)	72	(71)	81	(81)
Disagree	13	(11)	24	(26)	16	(15)
No answer	3	(4)	4	(3)	3	(4)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

here is another instance where greater specificity of questioning elicits apparent contradictions. When asked initially to consider the general fairness of the existing abortion law, some 40 per cent of all adults felt that the law required no change (page 5). Yet when attention is focused on the specific instance of rape, the overwhelming majority of Canadians actually opt for a change in agreeing that abortions be legalised in those cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape. While about 8 out of every 10 adults hold this view, French-speaking Canadians are somewhat less willing to legalise abortions under these circumstances than are

English-speaking Canadians: both in 1970 and 1974, approximately one-quarter of the francophone group felt the law should not be changed in this direction - about double the proportion of anglophones holding this view.

The Probability Of A Physically Deformed Or Mentally Defective Child

Under the present law in Canada, an abortion is legal if it is determined that pregnancy is likely to endanger the expectant mother's health. But what of the child's health? Question 2D probed this issue. It asked all respondents to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with the following proposition:

"An abortion should be permitted under the law in those cases where there is medical evidence that the woman is likely to give birth to a physically deformed or mentally defective child?"

The response to this line of questioning is tabled below:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
	%		%		%	
Agree	81	(86)	76	(77)	80	(84)
Disagree	16	(12)	21	(21)	17	(14)
No answer	3	(2)	3	(2)	3	(2)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

Again we see a stability of opinion over the four years between the two surveys, the great majority of people in each case opting for a law which

permits legal abortions in these circumstances. As before, however, note the difference of opinion between the two language groups, anglo-phone opinion being again more liberal than francophone.

Husband-Wife Disagreement

A final question (3) was directed at another dimension of attitude toward the legal status of abortion: should the law recognize the right of a married woman to decide for herself whether or not to have an abortion, or should the law also require the consent of her husband? The question read as follows:

"Suppose a couple are married. The woman is pregnant. She is in good health. She wishes to have an abortion but her husband wants her to have the child. In this situation, which of the following statements do you agree with?"

- (a) The law should permit the woman to have an abortion
- (b) The law should not permit the woman to have an abortion

Opinion on this issue divided as follows:

Response	English		French		Total	
	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)	1974	(1970)
The law:	%		%		%	
Should permit an abortion	31	(24)	19	(16)	28	(26)
Should not permit an abortion	66	(68)	78	(82)	69	(72)
No answer	3	(3)	3	(2)	3	(2)
Total	100	(100)	100	(100)	100	(100)

here again, opinion has not shifted significantly in the four years between the two surveys. In 1974, as in 1970, about a 70 per cent majority of adults feel that in these circumstances, the woman should not be permitted to obtain a legal abortion. Note that the proportion of people who advocate the legal right of the woman to decide for herself in this instance (28 per cent) closely approximates the proportion of people who endorse and support the principle of 'abortion on demand' (25 per cent). Note also the substantial difference between the two language groups in their response to this question.

Interestingly enough, men and women tend to agree on this issue, there being only very small differences of opinion. As might be expected, however, age affects opinion: about one-third of adults under age 50 feel that a woman should be permitted an abortion in the circumstances described in Question 3, whereas only 22 per cent of those over age 50 hold this view. (A detailed breakdown of responses to this question by age and by sex is provided in Appendix A.)

SUMMARY

This national survey of public opinion in Canada has indicated that, in late 1974, confronted with a statement of the abortion law and asked about its general fairness and adequacy, a large 44 per cent minority of adults felt that the present law is too strict and should be made more permissive, a slightly smaller 40 per cent felt the law is all right as it is and should remain unchanged, and a much smaller 13 per cent felt that the law is already too permissive. The remaining 3 per cent had no clear opinion.

These, however, proved to be reactions to the general assertion of the law that "an abortion is legal only in cases where a Hospital Medical Committee decides that the continuation of the pregnancy is likely to endanger the woman's health". From the replies given to a further series of questions touching on more specific applications of this law, it seems clear that the public's dissatisfaction with the rigidity of the present law is much more widespread than the above figures indicate.

Thus, on the important question of the need for either a Hospital Committee or simply a qualified physician to decide on an abortion on health grounds, just over 70 per cent of adults in Canada feel no need for the Committee - a relaxation that would of course require a change in the law.

Even more widespread is the feeling that there are special circumstances in which the law is wrong to deny a woman the right to an abortion. Thus,

where a pregnancy is the result of rape, or where there is medical evidence that a child is likely to be born physically deformed or mentally defective, the feeling of some 80 per cent of adults is that the law should, in such cases, permit an abortion.

Given these various indications of public support for a more permissive abortion law, and with some 70 per cent of adults calling for the abolition of the Hospital Committee, it remains a fact, however, that only a relatively small 25 per cent minority are inclined to go the whole length of approving 'abortion on demand': the remaining majority apparently feel the need for some qualifications.

As to differences in opinion between population sub-groups, the most striking of these are not (as one might have thought) differences between men and women, or between the young and the old, but rather differences between the two language groups. English Canadians are, on the whole, more inclined than French Canadians to have the abortion law made more permissive, French Canadians more inclined than English Canadians to have the law retained as it is - or made more strict. However, these are relative differences: both in English and French Canada, the general tendency is to feel that the abortion law, as it presently operates, is too strict and needs to be made more permissive. Indeed, on the question of dispensing with the Hospital Committee, the proportions of English and French Canadians advocating this are exactly the same - 71 per cent.

Finally, recalling these seeming anomalies or contradictions in

people's responses to different questions on the same issue, there is perhaps a warning here for devotees of public opinion polls. It is to beware the single-question, 'Gallup type' poll that so often makes the quite unwarranted assumption (a) that the respondent necessarily understands all the implications of the question asked and hence (b) that the response given to such a question necessarily provides all the answers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DETAILED TABULATIONS

The tables in this appendix show the distribution of responses to each of the questions asked, separately for the English and French samples, and for the two samples combined. In each case, the distribution of response is shown for all respondents, for men and women, and for three age groups, 18-34, 35-49 and 50-plus.

To take account of disproportionate returns by age and sex, data were weighted to population distributions by age and sex. In addition, the English and French samples were combined according to the known distribution of the total population between the English and French-speaking groups. Percentages in these appendix tables (as in the body of the report) are rounded to the nearest whole number.

QUESTION 1

Here is the first question. Under the present law in Canada, an abortion is legal only in cases where a Hospital Medical Committee decides that the continuation of the pregnancy is likely to endanger the woman's health. Which one of the following statements do you most agree with? (CHECK ONE BOX ONLY):

- (A) This law is too permissive: It makes it too easy for a woman to obtain a legal abortion.
- (B) This law is too strict: It makes it too difficult for a woman to obtain a legal abortion.
- (C) This law is just about right: It should remain unchanged.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
--	-------	-----	-------	-------	-------	-----

TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too Permissive	13	11	14	9	12	19
Too Strict	44	50	40	53	46	33
About Right	40	38	43	37	40	44
No Answer	3	1	3	1	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121

ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too Permissive	11	9	12	8	11	15
Too Strict	48	54	43	56	50	37
About Right	39	36	43	35	38	45
No Answer	2	1	2	1	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786

FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Too Permissive	18	17	19	11	15	31
Too Strict	34	38	31	43	36	19
About Right	44	42	45	45	44	41
No Answer	4	3	5	1	5	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

QUESTION 2A

Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

- (A) An abortion should not be permitted under the law in any circumstances.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
--	-------	-----	-------	-------	-------	-----

TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	10	8	11	7	9	15
Disagree	85	88	83	92	86	76
No Answer	5	4	6	1	5	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121

ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	7	6	8	5	7	10
Disagree	88	90	86	94	88	81
No Answer	5	4	6	1	5	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786

FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	17	14	19	11	14	29
Disagree	77	81	74	86	80	62
No Answer	6	5	7	3	6	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

QUESTION 2B

Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

- (B) An abortion should be permitted under the law in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	81	84	79	85	81	77
Disagree	16	13	18	13	16	18
No Answer	3	3	3	2	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121

ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	84	86	82	87	84	81
Disagree	13	11	15	11	13	15
No Answer	3	3	3	2	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786

FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	72	76	69	78	71	66
Disagree	24	21	26	20	25	27
No Answer	4	3	5	2	4	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

QUESTION 2C

Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

- (C) In those cases where the law permits an abortion because the woman's health is in danger, this should not require the opinion of a Hospital Committee - the opinion of a qualified physician is all that the law should require.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	71	71	72	71	72	71
Disagree	27	27	26	28	26	26
No Answer	2	2	2	1	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121
ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	71	72	71	72	72	70
Disagree	27	26	27	27	26	27
No Answer	2	2	2	1	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786
FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	71	69	73	69	71	73
Disagree	26	29	24	29	26	23
No Answer	3	2	3	2	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

QUESTION 2D

Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

- (D) An abortion should be permitted under the law in those cases where there is medical evidence that the woman is likely to give birth to a physically deformed or mentally defective child.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
--	-------	-----	-------	-------	-------	-----

TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	80	80	80	82	80	78
Disagree	17	17	17	16	17	17
No Answer	3	3	3	2	3	5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121

ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	81	82	81	83	81	80
Disagree	16	15	16	15	16	16
No Answer	3	3	3	2	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786

FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	76	75	76	77	77	71
Disagree	21	21	21	21	20	22
No Answer	3	4	3	2	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

QUESTION 2E

Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

- (E) An abortion should be permitted under the law to any woman who requests it, whatever the circumstances.

	Total	Men	Women	18-34	35-49	50+
TOTAL SAMPLE	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	25	27	22	29	27	17
Disagree	73	71	75	70	71	79
No Answer	2	2	3	1	2	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	3561	1591	1962	1496	941	1121

ENGLISH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	27	29	24	31	30	19
Disagree	71	69	74	68	68	78
No Answer	2	2	2	1	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	2397	1187	1210	995	616	786

FRENCH	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	19	19	17	23	20	10
Disagree	78	78	79	75	78	84
No Answer	3	3	4	2	2	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample Size	1164	404	752	501	325	335

MOISTEN THIS EDGE, FOLD WITH RETURN ADDRESS SHOWING, SEAL AND MAIL

THIS IS A NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON THE SUBJECT OF ABORTION AND THE LAW. PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BY EXPRESSING YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINION. WHEN YOU HAVE ANSWERED THEM, JUST INDICATE YOUR SEX AND AGE (THERE'S NO NEED TO ADD YOUR NAME) AND SEND THE FORM BACK TO US IMMEDIATELY.

1. Here's the first question.

Under the present law in Canada, an abortion is legal only in cases where a Hospital Medical Committee decides that the continuation of the pregnancy is likely to endanger the woman's health. Which one of the following statements do you most agree with? (CHECK ONE BOX ONLY):

- (A) This law is too permissive: It makes it too easy for a woman to obtain a legal abortion. ☐
- (B) This law is too strict: It makes it too difficult for a woman to obtain a legal abortion. ☐
- (C) This law is just about right: It should remain unchanged. ☐

2. Now please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT):

AGREE DISAGREE

- (A) An abortion should not be permitted under the law in any circumstances. ☐ ☐
- (B) An abortion should be permitted under the law in cases where the pregnancy is the result of rape. ☐ ☐
- (C) In those cases where the law permits an abortion because the woman's health is in danger, this should not require the opinion of a Hospital Committee — the opinion of a qualified physician is all that the law should require. ☐ ☐
- (D) An abortion should be permitted under the law in those cases where there is medical evidence that the woman is likely to give birth to a physically deformed or mentally defective child ☐ ☐
- (E) An abortion should be permitted under the law to any woman who requests it, whatever the circumstances. ☐ ☐

3. Suppose a couple are married. The woman is pregnant. She is in good health. She wishes to have an abortion but her husband wants her to have the child. In this situation which one of the following two statements do you agree with?

- (A) The law should permit the woman to have an abortion? ☐
- (B) The law should not permit the woman to have an abortion? ☐

(CHECK THE ONE STATEMENT WITH WHICH YOU AGREE)

Finally, in order that we can classify the results of this survey by sex and age,

please indicate your sex and age group below:

- male ☐ age 18-24 ☐
- female ☐ age 25-34 ☐
- age 35-49 ☐
- age 50-64 ☐
- age 65 and over ☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION. NOW FOLD AND MAIL THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IMMEDIATELY.



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